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Small-Scale Agriculture Today

Office for Small-Scale Agriculture



Summer 1990

U.S. Department of Agriculture - Cooperative State Research Service - Agricultural Research For A Better Tomorrow

AT ISSUE ... PAST/PRESENT/FUTURE

"Today we are still attempting to revitalize rural America and motivate our youth to be better citizens. We have not conquered the problems of rural to urban migration; the great gulf between the haves and have-nots continues to widen; and the severe problems of crime, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, poverty, and declining employment prevail. Is our continuing struggle with the problems of 100 years ago an indictment of our land-grant system? Have we failed to address the "people" problems that were the basic philosophy and intent of Justin Smith Morrill and his colleagues? To both questions, I would emphatically respond--"No." Although the problems are complex and systematic, we must continue to strengthen our ability to nurture the minds and lives of the people we serve. The story of the black land-grant system is the story of ideals and industry--we use a mere 3 percent of our labor force to produce the Nation's total food supplies; we are the best-fed Nation in the world; we export a significant amount of our produce; we are the number one industry in sustaining the world economy; and we are the premier leader in agricultural research. There are skeptics who still regard the land-grant system as a misnomer and agriculture as a mechanic avocation. We must raise public awareness about the critical role that agriculture has played in feeding the Nation and in developing the wealth of our natural resources. We must also sound the alarm that it is time for agriculture to turn its sights to future generations.

"As we celebrate our Centennial, we must look beyond the past and compound our strengths while creating boundless opportunities to surpass the collective history of the land-grant movement. Our future lies in the preservation of our natural resources and the educational development of our human resources. As Abraham Lincoln said, "Upon the subject of education, I can only say that I view it as the most important subject that we as a people can be engaged in."

(Dr. William P. Hytche, President of the University of Maryland-Eastern Shore, an excerpt from "A National Resource - A National Challenge. The 1890 Land-Grant Colleges and Universities," Justin Smith Morrill Lecture, Washington, D.C., November 20, 1989)

SECOND MORRILL ACT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, 1890-1990

1866 Lincoln University
1871 Alcorn State University
1872 South Carolina State College
1873 University of Arkansas - Pine Bluff
1875 Alabama A&M University
1876 Prairie View A&M University
1880 Southern University
1881 Tuskegee University
1882 Virginia State University
1886 Kentucky State University
1886 University of Maryland - Eastern Shore
1887 Florida A&M University
1891 Delaware State College
1891 North Carolina A&T State University
1895 Fort Valley State College
1897 Langston University
1912 Tennessee State University

TWO COPIES/SORRY!

Most everyone received a double dose of Spring 1990 Small-Scale Agriculture Today. Growing up has its problems. Our mailing list computer labeling system goofed; thus the delay and remailed Spring 1990 edition -- Bud Kerr.

TOPICS AND TECHNOLOGY

New - The source book, Recouple -- Natural Resource Strategies for Rural Economic Development, is now available. The 230-page book costs \$25 and is written for rural development specialists, rural community leaders, and natural resource specialists who are seeking ways to add value to a region's natural resources. It deals with forest, agricultural, tourism, and wildlife-based recreation resources. Contact: Margaret Thomas, Midwest Research Institute, 425 Volker Boulevard, Kansas City, MO 64110; telephone 816-753-7600, Ext. 449.

TIP - Baked tomatoes and apples retain their shape better when baked in a well-greased muffin tin.

Trees - Small-scale farmers who have woodlots on their property sometimes don't realize that money does grow on trees. For a copy of A Small-Scale Agriculture Alternative, "Woodlots" contact: Bud Kerr, USDA-CSRS, OSSA, Suite 342, Washington, DC 20250-2200; telephone 202-447-3640.

Retailing - "Items which start out in the 'specialty' category, i.e., Chinese vegetables like bok choy, snow peas, and shiitake mushrooms often become so popular with consumers that they become 'staple' items in their own right." (The Produce News, April 21, 1990, p.#2)

Forest Land - Members of the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Forestry finalized action on April 18, 1990, which will strengthen and expand Federal programs that provide management and protection assistance for State and private forest land. "Over 50 percent of this Nation's commercial forest land is in nonindustrial private ownership, yet we provide relatively small amounts of assistance for management of these lands. The U.S. Forest Service projects an increasing supply of timber from private lands," Subcommittee Chairman Harold Volkmer said.

Post-harvest -- Cucumbers can be stored for up to 2 weeks at 45-50°F. and 95 percent relative humidity. Lower temperatures cause chilling damage, and higher temperatures encourage yellowing. Yellowing will also be accelerated if cucumbers are stored in a room with tomatoes or apples.

TIP -- Do not plant eggplants in soils that have produced eggplants, tomatoes, potatoes, or strawberries within the previous 5 and preferably 10 years as they are very susceptible to Verticillium wilt disease.

Proceedings - A collection of 10 papers written for the Farm Machinery Days for Small and Part-Time Farmers Conference, Dauphin, PA, April 6, 1990. Costs \$10 to get a copy, check payable to NRAES. Contact: Northeast Regional Agricultural Engineering Service, 152 Riley-Robb Hall, Cooperative Extension, Ithaca, NY 14853; telephone 607-255-7654.

Women Farmers - "The 1987 Census of Agriculture found that women operated more than 130,000 farms while more than 44,600 farms were operated by minorities." (The Cotton Gin and Oil Mill Press, April 7, 1990, p.#7)

Heirloom Reprint - Field and Garden Vegetables of America, Burr and Fearing has been reprinted. The 664-page book lists 1,000 varietal descriptions with cultivation data, costs \$30 postpaid. Contact: Keith Crotz, American Botanist Booksellers, 1103 W. Truitt, Chillicothe, IL 61523; telephone 309-274-5254.

Poisoning - Cats don't have an abundance of the enzymes that break down toxic substances in the liver. That's why they are easily poisoned by overdoses of drugs that are usually considered innocuous. Be cautious when using insect repellents to rid pets of ticks!

TIP - Stir as little as possible when cooking vegetables. Unnecessary stirring adds air to vegetables and increases the loss of vitamin C.

New Temperature Map - To obtain your copy of The Plant Hardiness Map, USDA Miscellaneous Publication 814, order from The Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, North Capitol Street N.W., Washington, DC 20402. The cost is \$6.50 (domestic) per copy. Make check payable to Superintendent of Documents, or order by telephoning 202-783-3238.

Cash Prizes - Before November 30, 1990, The North American Strawberry Growers Association is looking for recipes that use plenty of fresh, ripe strawberries, are easy to prepare, and taste great. Cash prizes total \$500. Recipes can be submitted to NASGA Contest, P.O. Box 383, Red Hook, NY 12571.

Herbs and Spices - The Directory of Specialists in Herbs, Spices and Medicinal Plants improves the communication of people interested in these plants. Costs \$8. Contact: Lyle E. Craker, Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003; telephone 413-545-2347, Fax 413-545-1242.

Home Grown - "The USA is cultivating a growing continent of gardeners. In 1988, 28.8% of people in the USA were growing fruits, vegetables, and herbs at home; in 1989, 29.8% of those foods. The percentage grown organically was 52.2% in 1988 and 56.8% in 1989." (USA Today, May 3, 1990, p.#1A)

Bees - "There are 3,500 bees to a pound. A strong colony can contain as many as 50,000 individuals, or more than 14 pounds of bees." (Countryside, May/June, 1990, p.#32)

Food Prices - "The Food Marketing Institute, a trade organization representing the Nation's supermarkets and allied businesses, said its annual survey of food shoppers found a growing concern about food prices for the first time in nearly a decade. The survey also found that the average weekly household grocery bill held stable in 1989 at \$74. In 1981, the average weekly cost of food buying was estimated at \$55 per household." (The New York Times, May 9, 1990, p.#D19)

Containers - By growing vegetables in containers food plants can be raised on a balcony or terrace. However it is important to use containers of adequate size, see that containers are well supplied with drainage holes and the holes are covered with clay shards or other materials so that soil will not run out or block the holes.

Soil Mix - 1 part rich productive garden soil, 1 part leaf mold or peat moss, 1 part builder's sand or perlite, 1 Tablespoon dry 5-10-5 fertilizer per 12-inch pot of soil use and 1 Tablespoon dolomitic lime per 12-inch pot. Thoroughly mix together.

FREE - Summer Sampler, a catalog listing of events, classes and audiotapes about herbs. Contact: Carrie Van Dyck, The Herbfarm, 32804AG Issaquah - Fall City Road, Fall City, WA 98024; telephone 206-784-2222.

TIP - Fruit will ripen if left in a paper bag in a dark place for a few days.

Quotable - "Agriculture must always be a marriage of pure science and applied science. However, most decisions affecting American agriculture over the past few decades were based on politics or emotion. American agriculture, by itself and as part of the environment, has come to a point where more of the same could be fatal...Michael English." (New Mexico Resources, Spring 1990, p.#15)

Beginner - "Using Your Computer - A Guide for the Beginner" is written for the beginning computer user of which farmers and ranchers make up a large part of that group. Costs \$15 and comes with a diskette of handy utilities. Contact: Kelly Klaas, 176-B Highway #74, Twin Falls, ID 83301; telephone 208-733-4251.

Costs \$5 - Proceeding of the 1990 New York State Vegetable Conference is available. Make your check payable to New York State Vegetable Growers Association. Contact: Jean Warholic, NYSVGA, P.O. Box 356, Ithaca, NY 14851-0356; telephone 607-539-7648.

Fighting Flies - Seemingly a hopeless task, there are other ways besides swatting and pesticides, i.e., tiny parasitic wasps that kill fly pupae, traps that kill adults, and sanitation. Contact: Richard Miller, USDA-ARS Livestock Insects Laboratory, Building 177-A, BARC-E, Beltsville, MD 20705; telephone 301-344-2478.

Biological Control - The 4th edition of "Suppliers of Beneficial Organisms in North America" lists 60 companies that sell biological controls. Contact: Larry Bezark, California Dept. of Food and Agriculture, Biological Control Services Program, 3288 Meadowview Road, Sacramento, CA 95832; telephone 916-427-4590.

Lumber - This 42-page guide, "Lumber From Local Woodlots," provides background knowledge of the woodlot-to-lumber process. Costs \$4.75, check payable to NRAES. Contact: Northeast Regional Agricultural Engineering Service, 152 Riley-Robb Hall, Cooperative Extension, Ithaca, NY 14853; telephone 607-255-7654.

Help Support - The Organic Food Production Association of North America (OFPANA) is developing a national definition for organic food, including a specific list of allowable inputs organic farmers may use. Dues are \$25 for nonvoting membership, \$100 for voting membership. Contact: Judy Gillian, Membership Director, OFPANA, P.O. Box 31, Belchertown, MA 01007; telephone 413-323-4531.

(Mention of commercial enterprises or brand names does not constitute endorsement or imply preference by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.)

VIDEOTAPES

Several informational videotapes developed to assist sheep producers are available from Lincoln University. All videotapes are loaned for 1 week only! When ordering, please specify your preference date(s) and alternate date(s) if possible. Order well in advance to allow for processing confirmation, and shipping. There is a \$2 charge for each video to cover postage. Make your check payable to Lincoln University. Videos offered are the following:

Care of Ewes and Lambs at Lambing Time
LUAG 38 - 52 minutes

Live Lamb Carcass Evaluation
LUAG 59 - 21 minutes

Greater Profit Through Wool Marketing
LUAG 91 - 30 minutes

Making Money Marketing Clean Wool
Pack-It-With-Pride
LUAG 77 - 45 minutes

Skills for Beginning Sheep Handlers I and II
LUAG 72 - 60 minutes

Contact: William Helvey, Media Center Director, University Extension, Lincoln University Media Center, 900 Moreau Drive, Jefferson City, MO 65101; telephone 314-681-5554. Also, the user is responsible for return postage.

IPM SUCCESS STORY

A Korean lady beetle was introduced into the United States in 1984 to feed on the euonymus scale, itself an insect of foreign origin. This introduction was part of an Agricultural Research Service (ARS) small farms project directed towards the biological control of several scale insect pests. To date, the predator has been distributed to 40-plus cooperators in more than 20 States. The beetle is established in at least 9 States. Because of the successful control of the scale at several test locations, several States have begun their own distribution program to aid nature in spreading the little lady beetle. One encouraging aspect is that after the beetle had controlled the scale and then apparently disappeared from a couple of test sites, the predator did reappear a year later when populations of the scale again began to develop on the same bushes and trees. Contact: John J. Drea, USDA-ARS Beneficial Insects Laboratory, Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, Beltsville, MD 20705; telephone 301-344-3185.

SEND - Topics, technologies, and calendar of events (yours) to the Office for Small-Scale Agriculture (OSSA); telephone 202-447-3640. Dialcom-AGS3037 H. Kerr or Fax 202-475-3179.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 9-10, 1990 - Organic Meat Symposium, Hilton Hotel, Minneapolis, MN. Contact: June Rogers, Extension Special Programs, University of Minnesota, 405 Coffey Hall, 1420 Eckles Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108; telephone 800-367-5363 or 612-625-1214.

July 23-28, 1990 - North Carolina Small Farm Week, North Carolina A&T University, Greensboro, NC. Contact: D.M. Lyons, Agricultural Extension Program, P.O. Box 21928, Greensboro, NC 27420; telephone 919-334-7956.

July 24, 1990 - Penn State Vegetable Field Day, Rock Springs, PA. Contact: Mike Orzolek, Department of Horticulture, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16802; telephone 814-863-2251.

August 3-5, 1990 - 16th Annual Summer Conference, The National Organic Farmers Association (NOFA), Hampshire College, Amherst, MA. Contact: Julie Rawson, RFD 2, Sheldon Road, Barre, MA 01005; telephone 508-355-2853.

August 23-25, 1990 - Fourth National Amaranth Symposium, Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport Hilton Hotel. Contact: Nancy Breneman, 405 Coffey Hall, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN 55108; telephone 612-625-2722.

September 23-26, 1990 - The Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers (ASCFG) Conference, Trade Show and Floral Design Symposium, Holiday Inn Beach Resort, Ventura, CA. Contact: Judy Laushman, 155 Elm St., Oberlin, OH 44074; telephone 216-774-2887.

September 30 - October 4, 1990 - 75th Annual Meeting of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents, Red Lion Inn, Seattle, WA. Contact: Doug Warnock, Chair, Registration Committee, County Court House, 5th and Main, Ellensburg, WA 98926; telephone 509-962-7507.

October 20-21, 1990 - Missouri Small Farmers Gathering, Lyndell Galloway Farm, Centralia, MO. Contact: Lyndell Galloway, telephone 714-682-3939 or Virgil Gough telephone 314-983-2289.

October 22-26, 1990 - International Symposium on Goat Production, Florida A&M University, Tallahassee, FL. Contact: Claude McGowas, Room 202 Perry Paige Building, Florida A&M University, Tallahassee, FL 32307; telephone 904-599-3546.

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